(c) and (d) No, Sir. Indian farmers have not rejected bio-cultivation. In fact, the sustenance in agriculture of a large number of farmers depends on bio-cultivation with no or low external input. The measures taken up in the interest of the farmers include strengthening research on plant breeding and biotechnology for development of varieties resistant to pests and diseases, and formulating package of practices for Integrated Pest Management and Integrated Nutrient Management for various crops.

Eriophyid mite disease of coconut in Karnataka

3347. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) how many coconut trees are affected due to Eriophyid mite in Karnataka;

(b) whether the State Government has sent any proposal for financial assistance to control Eriophyid mite on coconut palm;

(c) if so, the amount sought for; and

(d) the amount released so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) The expert team constituted by Government of India to conduct roving survey, visited mite infested areas in Karnataka and reported 185 lakh mite affected coconut palms in the State.

(b) and (c) During 2001-2002, Government of Karnataka submitted a proposal to the Coconut Development Board seeking financial assistance of Rs. 166 crores for control of Eriophyid mite of coconut.

(d) An amount of Rs. 1350.40 lakhs has been released so far to the Government of Karnataka during the period 1998-99 to 2001-2002.

Field trials of Hybrid Transgenic Mustard

3348. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have given clearance for large scale multilocational field trials and commercialization of hybrid transgenic mustard;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the agronomic performance and bio-safety aspects of the hybrid have been evaluated; and

(d) if so, the results thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (d) Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) granted permission to Proagro Seed Co. Ltd. to conduct multi location field trials of transgenic mustard. The trials were conducted during 2001-02 in 5 States at 50 locations. The States are Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The trials include study on evaluation of agronomic performance and bio safety aspects of the transgenic seeds. So far the transgenic mustard has not been approved for the commercial use in India.

Promotion of agriculture sector

3349. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the details of measures Government have taken to provide easy availability of credit and other inputs, infrastructure facilities for development of agri-business industries, and freeing movement of agro-produce so as to promote the agriculture sector in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): Govenment of India through various Central sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes ensures supply of inputs like certified seeds, soil nutrients, pesticides, agricultural implements etc. for enhancement of production and productivity in agriculture sector. Till January 2002, 214.83 lakh Kisan Credit Cards have been issued, providing flexibility and security in the flow of credit to the farmers. Infrastructure in rural areas is being strengthened through Rural Infrastructure Development fund, rural electrification programme, Pradhan Mantri Sadak Yojana. There are the specific schemes for rural godowns and storages. Dissemination of technology and extension services are revitalized through strengthening of Krishi Vigyan Kendras. For enhancing irrigation facilities, the Government is implementing specific programmes like watershed development scheme, on farm- water management, command area development and various other minor and major irrigation projects. Under the Rural Employment Generation Programmes, margin money assistance is provided for setting up Khadi and village industries including agri-business industries in rural areas. Assistance is also provided for food processing industrial estates / food parks and for infrastructure for cold chain facilities and preservation and processing of food including fish. *Vide* a Central order dated 15.2.2002, any dealer can freely buy, stock, sell, transport,